

**RELIGION DEPARTMENT  
2009-2010 FALL  
COURSE OFFERINGS**

**Undergraduate Program**

**REL SEM**

**Required Colloquium for Junior Majors**

**Professor(s):** AnneMarie Luijendijk

**Description:** First semester Junior Majors participate in a required workshop on research and writing that culminates in a ten-page research paper. The colloquium is a non-credit fifth course. The grade for the colloquium is factored into the final grade for the junior independent work.

**ANT 218/REL 218**

**Religion and Medicine**

**Professor(s):** João Biehl

**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.

**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

**Description:** The seminar examines illness experiences and therapeutic practices as they are related to religious traditions worldwide. We will specifically look at the mind-body interface amid suffering and investigate how new medical technologies intermingle with belief systems and local forms of care. We will also consider how the themes of sacrifice and salvation are actualized in humanitarian and global health interventions and theorize emerging notions of wellbeing and human agency. Students will learn to analyze representations of religious experience and to conduct ethnographic interviews.

**REL 224**

**Nonviolence Across Religious History**

**Professor(s):** Jonathan C. Gold

**Department Area Requirement:** Religions of Asia

**Description:** When the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. took inspiration from Gandhi's Hindu doctrine of *ahimsa*, he was drawing upon many centuries of "East-West" dialogue. Gandhi himself owed the idea in large part to Tolstoy, who for his part had found his Christian beliefs reshaped through studying Asian religions. This course traces an intellectual history of the modern doctrine of nonviolence, emphasizing its emergence through transnational, multi-religious dialogue. Topics include nonviolence in Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism; Hume and Spinoza; Max Müller; Theosophy and South Asian religious reformers; Transcendentalism; Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King.

**REL 235/NES 235**

**In the Shadow of Swords: Martyrdom and Holy War in Islam**

**Professor(s):** Shaun E. Marmon

**Department Area Requirement:** Islam

**Description:** This course will examine the concepts of martyrdom and holy war in the three monotheistic traditions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. How are war and martyrdom presented in the sacred texts of these three traditions? Historically, how have these three traditions idealized and problematized the martyr and/or the holy warrior in very different ways? In what ways have modern religious revivalism and nationalism appropriated martyrdom and holy war in our time? Course material will include a packet of sources in translation, scholarly articles & films.

**NES 240/REL 240 - CANCELLED**

**Muslims and the Qur'an**

**Professor(s):** Muhammad Qasim Zaman

**Department Area Requirement:** Islam

**Description:** A broad-ranging introduction to pre-modern, modern, and contemporary Islam in light of how Muslims have approached their foundational religious text, the Qur'an. Topics include: Muhammad and the emergence of Islam; theology, law and ethics; war and peace; mysticism; women and gender; and modern debates on Islamic reform. We shall examine the varied contexts in which Muslims have interpreted their sacred text, their agreements and disagreements on what it means and, more broadly, their often competing understandings of Islam and of what it is to be a Muslim.

**NES 348****Islamic Ritual Laws****Professor(s):** Hossein Modarressi**Department Area Requirement:** Islam (FALL 2009 ONLY)

**Description:** This course examines the outlines of Islamic ritual law. It starts with a general survey of the term and logic of the pre-modern Islamic legal discourse. It then continues to focus on such issues as Islamic festivals, religious rituals for the occasions of birth and death, the concepts of worship and sacrifice, and various Islamic acts of devotion in matters such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving and annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

**REL 252****The Early Christian Movement****Professor(s):** Elaine H. Pagels**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean

**Description:** Investigation of the history of the Christian movement, starting from the earliest gospel sources, from the New Testament gospels of Mark, Luke, Matthew, and John to gospels outside the canon, including the gospels of Thomas and Mary Magdalene. Topics include: the letters of the apostle Paul, and how they were read; questions about what resurrection means; what sexual practices Christians should--or should not--observe; the formation of "heresy" and "orthodoxy"; early sources on persecution of Christians, and the "acts of the martyrs"; the impact of persecution on church organization; and some writings of major "church fathers".

**REL 257****Religion and American Movies****Professor(s):** Judith L. Weisenfeld**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America

**Description:** The controversy over Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* sits in a long history of complex interactions between religious Americans and popular movies. In this course we explore the politics of representing religion at key moments in American film and religious history. We consider how movies provide unique insight into aspects of American religious life and how representations of religion reveal the shifting contours of constructions of American identity. Topics include: censorship; representations of religious, ethnic, and racial minorities; gender, sexuality, and religion; recent filmmaking strategies of religious groups.

**REL 261/CHV 261****Christian Ethics and Modern Society****Professor(s):** Eric S. Gregory**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought

**Description:** An introduction to Christian ideals of conduct, character, and community, and to modern disputes over their interpretation and application. Are Christian virtues and principles fundamentally at odds with the ethos of liberal democracy oriented toward rights, equality, and freedom? What do Christian beliefs and moral concepts imply about issues related to feminism, racism, and pluralism? What is the relationship between religious convictions, morality, and law? Special emphasis on selected political and economic problems, sexuality and marriage, bioethics, capital punishment, the environment, war, and the role of religion in public life.

**REL 270****Christianity in the Medieval Millennium, c. 476-1453****Professor(s):** Phillip Haberkern**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean

**Description:** This course is intended to be a survey of medieval Christianity, beginning roughly with the fall of Rome and ending approximately with the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453. This course will comprise lectures and primary source discussions, with the overall goal of illuminating the various ways in which "Christendom" was defined and circumscribed in that thousand years. This focus on the identity of the church, broadly speaking, will be used as a lens through which to observe and analyze the varieties of practices and beliefs that characterized Christian communities in the Middle Ages.

**REL 275/LAS 275****Church and Religion in Colonial Latin America****Professor(s):** Jessica Delgado**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America

**Description:** An introductory exploration of the history of religious change and the Catholic Church in Latin America during the dramatic years of Spanish and Portuguese colonization, from 1492 to the beginning of mainland independence in the early nineteenth century. Through primary sources, secondary readings, lectures, and discussion, students will grapple with such subjects as: the role of the church in "the conquest"; the complexities of religious change in indigenous populations; women and men's daily encounters with the church and devotional culture; and changes in religious expression and the role of the church in colonial society.

**COM 224/REL 290****Representing the Queen of Sheba in the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Traditions****Professor(s):** Wendy Laura Belcher**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as a departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

**Description:** The Queen of Sheba is perhaps the most famous woman in history, having been depicted for two thousand years in three great world traditions--Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Comparing representations of the queen across these traditions provides a unique opportunity to study the complex ways that groups think about national identity, gender, and race. Students will learn to detect the cultural assumptions underlying texts from other societies and become more aware of their own assumptions. All assigned texts will be read in English, but students with skills in relevant languages (e.g., Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Ethiopic) are most welcome.

**REL 314****Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life, Theology, and Ethics: A Legacy for our Times?****Professor(s):** David W. Miller**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought

**Description:** Bonhoeffer was born into an affluent, aristocratic, and not particularly religious German family. What compelled him to become one of the greatest theologians, ethicists, and martyrs of World War II? How might his life, ethics, and theology be a resource for ethical issues we face in today's church, marketplace, government, or society at large?

**AMS 323/JDS 323/REL 394****America in Judaism****Professor(s):** Lance Sussman**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as a departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

**Description:** Although the idea of an "American Judaism" emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century, scholars have yet to define this concept in precise terms and explain how it differs from a simpler historical understanding of "Judaism in America." Our seminar will examine the Americanization of Judaism beginning with the earliest transplanted Iberian concepts of Judaism in the "new world" to the transformation of Jewish religious life in the United States. Special attention will be paid to Jewish theology, the rabbinate, gender, denominationalism and the polity of the American synagogue.

**ECS 392/POL 414/REL 392****God and Politics****Professor(s):** Leora F. Batnitzky, Eric S. Gregory**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought.

**Description:** Focusing on select primary texts from antiquity to the present, this seminar considers various attempts to delineate God's relation to politics from within the history of western political thought, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the American Founding. Prominent politicians, public intellectuals, and religious leaders will also visit and offer lectures outside of the course.

**CAAS 332/REL 332****The Nation of Islam in America****Professor(s):** Wallace Best**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America

**Description:** This course will explore the various meanings attributed to Nation of Islam (NOI) cultural and religious practices. Of particular concern will be the ways its ideological structure has allowed the NOI to function both as a "black nationalist" and religious body. Since the movement has historically been characterized by its charismatic leadership, we will spend time examining the lives of such figures as Wallace D. Fard, Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and Louis Farrakhan. Other themes covered in the course will include: women and the NOI, the return to Orthodoxy, the NOI and black Christianity, and the NOI and political power.

**NES 334/REL 334 - CANCELLED****Modern Islamic Political Thought****Professor(s):** Muhammad Qasim Zaman**Department Area Requirement:** Islam

**Description:** An examination of major facets of Islamic political thought from the late nineteenth century to the present in a broadly comparative framework and against the backdrop of medieval Islamic thought. Topics include: the "fragmentation" of religious authority and its consequences for Muslim politics; conceptions of the shari'a and of the Islamic state; and Islamist discourses on gender, violence, and relations with non-Muslims.

**REL 335/NES 356****Moses and Jesus in the Islamic Tradition****Professor(s):** Shaun E. Marmon**Department Area Requirement:** Islam

**Description:** The course will focus on the changing representations of the prophets Musa (Moses) and `Isa (Jesus) within the Islamic tradition. Course materials include readings in translation from the Qur'an, hadith, Sufi poetry, the popular "Tales of the Prophets" as well as modern Islamic texts on social justice, and novels. We will examine the ways in which these prophets, while recognized by Muslims as foundational figures in Christianity and Judaism, played and continue to play a prominent role, as monotheistic prophets and as religious exemplars, in many diverse aspects of Islamic thought and practice.

**REL 340/JDS 340****Ancient Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls****Professor(s):** Martha Himmelfarb**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean

**Description:** This course studies the history of Judaism in ancient Palestine from the emergence of the Torah as an authoritative document under Persian rule in the middle of the fifth century BCE through the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, with an emphasis on the critical reading of primary sources. Much of the second half of the course is devoted to the Dead Sea Scrolls and their implications for our understanding of ancient Judaism.

**REL 350****Demons and Angels, "the gods," God and Satan****Professor(s):** Elaine H. Pagels**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean

**Description:** The seminar will investigate sources ranging from the Babylonian creation story and Homer's Illiad to passages from Genesis, Exodus, Job, the Hebrew prophets, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament, to see how stories of invisible beings (gods, demons, angels) construct group identity (who "we" are, and who are the "others"--and what characterizes each) and express group values; will note what each implies in political, social, and practical terms.

**REL 371 - CANCELLED****Religious Radicals****Professor(s):** Albert J. Raboteau**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America

**Description:** This seminar offers students an opportunity to reflect upon the lives and writings of several 20th century American religious figures whose socially radical visions were based upon religious experiences and ideals. Examining the relationship between biographical, historical, social, intellectual, and religious factors in the lives of these figures will be a major focus of our discussion, as will be the interrelationship and cross influences among them.

**REL 373****Studies in Religion: Holy Ordinary: Religious Dimensions in Contemporary Fiction****Professor(s):** Albert J. Raboteau**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement. DOES count as a departmental.

**Description:** Through close reading and critical discussion of authors such as William Faulkner, George Bernanos, James Baldwin, and Walker Percy; and that of some contemporaries (Mark Saltzman, Marilyn Robinson, William Trevor, and Manil Suri), this seminar will focus on the moral and religious values they discover in the "holy ordinary" of their characters' lives. These works offer an alternative and often surprising mapping of the location and the meaning of sanctity, religion, and the sacred, exemplifying the insight of the 20th century French poet Paul Eluard, who once wrote, "There is another world, but it is within this one."

**REL 383/WOM 383****Disorderly Women in American Religious History****Professor(s):** Kathi Kern**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America

**Description:** From Mohawk Saints and suspected witches in Colonial America, to "Girl Rabbis" of the Wild West, to Marian visionaries and Mormon feminists in the twentieth century, American history is overrun with women who challenged the gendered boundaries of religious practice and belief. This course surveys that rich history.

**REL 393/JDS 393/PHI 393****Spinoza: Philosophy, Religion, and Politics****Professor(s):** Oded Schechter**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought

**Description:** In this course we will develop a reading of Spinoza's philosophy by working through his Ethics. We will consider Spinoza's conceptions of ontology, focusing on the relation of ontology to human existence, politics and religion.

**EAS 415/HIS 415**

**Intellectual History of China to the Fifth Century**

**Professor(s):** Willard J. Peterson

**Department Area Requirement:** Religions of Asia

**Description:** Critical consideration of a selection of monumental contributions to early Chinese thought, and the uses to which they were put by later Chinese thinkers. Readings will be from English translations such as: [Analects],[ Lao-tzu], [Chuang-tzu], [Mencius],[ I-ching] and secondary works. All assignments are available on reserve.

**REL 450**

**Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit**

**Professor(s):** Jeffrey L. Stout

**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought

**Description:** This seminar will focus on the conceptions of knowledge, recognition, ethical life, value conflict, freedom, morality, religion, and the Absolute developed in G.W.F. Hegel's most influential book, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which we will be reading in English translation.

For more detailed information on each course, please visit:

<http://registrar1.princeton.edu/course/course.cfm>